

# **NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE**

## **TELEWORK PROGRAM**

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**Richard W. Spinrad, Ph.D.**  
**Assistant Administrator for**  
**Ocean Services and Coastal**  
**Zone Management**

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**SUPERCEDES AND REPLACES NOS FLEXIPLACE PROGRAM DATED JANUARY 2001**

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## **PREFACE**

The National Ocean Service (NOS) is continually working to provide a quality worklife for its employees. The Telework Program (previously referred to as Flexiplace) provides a wide range of benefits to employees and the organization with proper and judicious implementation. A Telework Program is offered to all NOS offices. Employee participation is voluntary and employees may terminate their participation at any time. NOS follows the DOC Telework Program and the NOAA Supplemental Guidelines (see Attachments 1 and 2). The NOS Telework Program is not meant to duplicate these two programs, but to supplement them. Therefore, it is critical that all supervisors/managers and interested employees read the NOS Telework Program as well as the DOC/NOAA telework policies before making a decision to participate in the NOS Telework Program.

This updated NOS Telework Program:

- Renames the Plan to "NOS Telework Program" and makes other terminology changes to reflect more up-to-date terminology and to be consistent with DOC/NOAA.
- Allows for redelegation of Approval Authorities for Full (Regularly Scheduled) and Short Term Agreements (Intermittent or Episodic) to Program/Staff Office Directors and Division Chiefs respectively
- Allows agreement terms up to one year.
- Makes some changes in the Qualifying Positions
- Updates the "Number of Employees" section to reflect Public Law 106-346 requiring agencies to establish policies allowing eligible employees to telework "to the maximum extent possible without diminishing employee performance."
- Allows working at Telecenters at the Program/Staff Office discretion and cost.
- Changes the program evaluation from every 6 months to once a year.
- Updates the Forms to be used.
- Updates the Procedural Requirements to reflect all the above changes.
- Requires supervisors to assure that the participating employee has met IT security requirements including the completion of the NOAA IT Security Training.

Telework is a management option, rather than an employee right, and does not change the terms and conditions of employment. There is no automatic right of the employee to continue participation in the event of a change of supervisor, work situation, or job requirement. The overall interests of the office must take precedence over working at the alternative work site. Telework must not adversely affect the performance of the employee who is participating or his/her co-workers. Telework is not a substitute for dependent care. During established work hours, the participant should make arrangements for child care, elder care and any other dependent care so that the employee's ability to complete work assignments is not adversely affected. The office's workload will be distributed equitably, and

methods will be instituted to ensure that office employees are not burdened with the Telework participant's responsibilities.

### **ADDITIONAL NOS TELEWORK GUIDELINES**

**APPROVAL AUTHORITY:** Program and Staff Office Directors have the approval authority for participation in a Telework Program. Approval authority for participation in the program on an intermittent or episodic basis as described below may be redelegated to Division Chiefs. This must be done in writing with a copy sent to the Management and Budget Office. Only the Assistant Administrator, NOS, can approve any requests for exceptions to this program.

Regularly Scheduled Participation in the Telework Program is defined as:

- An arrangement based on other than a temporary accommodation or condition, in which an employee works at an alternative work site for at least one day per bi-weekly pay period. Under normal circumstances, the agreement period will be for one year and employees should work a minimum of three days in the conventional office (or two days for those employees working AWS schedules with a day off). See "Qualifying Positions" section for certain restrictions.

Intermittent or Episodic Participation in the Telework Program is defined as:

- An arrangement where work is performed on an occasional, one-time or irregular basis. It falls into the following two categories:

1. Ad hoc. Infrequent periods of time when projects/assignments have short turn-around times and/or require intense concentration. Under such circumstances the employee typically works at an alternate location for short periods of time, away from typical office distractions. This enables the employee to focus more effectively on completion of the assignment. The agreement can be written up as a one-time event or written for a period of time (up to a year) where multiple ad-hoc events may occur so each incident does not require additional paperwork; and

2. Medical/Family Need. Arrangements for 120 days or less for medical or family need purposes (and extensions to an initial request). Total time of initial request and extensions must not exceed 6 months. Examples of these would be: (1) working at home during personal convalescence from a short-term injury or illness; and (2) taking care of and/or driving sick or convalescing family members to doctor's appointments and/or therapy sessions.

**QUALIFYING POSITIONS:** All supervisory and non-supervisory employees in positions with work suitable for telework (refer to Attachment 3,

Guidelines for Selecting Telework Participants). It does not apply to employees serving a probationary or trial period, nor for student interns unless an exception is authorized by the DOC Office of Human Resources Management based on operational need. Supervisors', Team Leaders' and administrative employees' participation is restricted on regularly scheduled agreements to no more than 1 day a week.

Each office must identify the positions that are suitable for telework as well as those positions that, when considered in their entirety, are not. Work suitable for telework depends on job content, rather than job series or title, type of appointment, or work schedule. But even jobs not entirely suited for telework may contain duties that can be performed at an alternate work site either on a regularly scheduled or intermittent/episodic basis.

**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:** The 2001 Department of Transportation appropriations measure, which became law in October 2000 (Public Law 106-346), required agencies to establish policies allowing eligible employees to telework "to the maximum extent possible without diminishing employee performance." The law also directed OPM to ensure that the requirement applied to at least 25 percent of the Federal workforce by October 2001, and to an additional 25 percent each year thereafter.

**ASSOCIATED COSTS:** Government payment of costs for installation of computers and associated equipment and additional telephone installation and/or basic services, should be determined on a case by case basis. Either the employee or organization should already have the basic equipment to do the work.

**GENERAL SCHEDULES:** Employees will work within the already established NOS AWS schedules or union-negotiated agreements.

**ALTERNATE WORKSITES:** Employees can "Work-at-Home" or at authorized Telecenters. Approval for working at Telecenters is at the discretion of the Program/Staff Office. Any fees associated with working at a Telecenter is at the expense of the office.

**ANTICIPATED BENEFITS:** The anticipated benefits are: (1) attract and retain a high-quality work force; (2) reduce employee absenteeism and accommodate employees with health problems while they are still able and want to work; (3) reduce commuting time and costs; (4) increase flexibility in coordinating work priorities with personal and family responsibilities; (5) improve employment opportunities for the disabled and mobility-restricted persons; (6) reduce traffic congestion and its associated health, pollution and energy problems; and (7) facilitate continuity of operations planning.

**EVALUATION/REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:** Each year the Management and Budget Office will conduct an evaluation of the Telework Program. Supervisors/Team Leaders and participants are required to complete evaluation questionnaires. Program and Staff Offices must retain

records of participation for reporting purposes and also be prepared to complete evaluation questionnaires. As a minimum, offices will be expected to furnish data on the number of employees eligible to participate in telework and the number actually participating in regularly scheduled and intermittent or episodic telework arrangements.

**PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Interested supervisors, team leaders and employees read all guidelines including the DOC/NOAA telework policies. A "Supervisory Guide to the NOS Telework Program" is available to help supervisors implement the program within their offices.

2. Supervisor, employee's team leader (if applicable) and employee meets to discuss and determine if employee meets eligibility requirements (see DOC Telework Program, Selecting Telework Participants).

3. Employees must complete Attachment 4 - NOAA Telework Application and Agreement and, if the alternate workplace is a private residence, Attachment 5 - NOAA Telework Safety Checklist.

3. A justification and request for a Telework arrangement is prepared by the supervisor/team leader including all applicable forms. This request must be endorsed by the employee's immediate supervisor and then cleared up through the chain of command before submission to the appropriate approving official. Additional information is required for participation on intermittent or episodic agreements as follows:

a. Arrangements based on medical needs must be for 120 days or less. A doctor's written certification must be submitted with the request stating the nature of the employee's illness, what type of work the employee is allowed to do, and the benefits that would be achieved from using Telework. Other information may also be used by management to assist with evaluating the medical need.

b. Arrangements based on family care needs must be for 120 days or less. Telework is not a substitute for dependent care. An explanation must be included in the justification describing how the employee's time will be allocated for work at the office and work at home, and how this can be accommodated with family care responsibilities at home. Attachment 6 - Family Care Needs, cites some examples of appropriate family care arrangements.

c. Requests for extension of an arrangement for medical or family needs (up to 6 months total) must be initiated by the employee, and include:

1. An updated doctor's written certification regarding the continuing medical need, or an updated description of the family care need;

2. An evaluation by the immediate supervisor/team leader of the employee's performance while on Telework. It is the burden of the employee to demonstrate that the transferred office function can be effectively performed at an alternate location; and

3. A revised/updated work plan from the supervisor/team leader.

d. For ad hoc arrangements based on intermittent critical or time-sensitive projects of 5 days or less, explain what type of projects might require this arrangement and how working at an alternate location would be beneficial in getting the work done. Also, if the agreement is to cover multiple episodes, include the approximate frequency the employee may need to work at the alternate location. Renewals to an ad-hoc agreement must also be resubmitted with an evaluation of previous arrangements. NOTE: Approvals for each instance of working at the alternate location within the agreement time period must be approved by the employees supervisor.

All renewals to previously approved Telework arrangements must be sent to the same approval authority as an initial request for approval. If there have been no changes that would effect the NOAA Telework Safety Checklist (i.e. employee moved), only the updated NOAA Telework Application and Agreement needs to be submitted with a request for renewal justification/memorandum explaining any changes from the prior agreement, proposed work activities and a brief evaluation of the prior Telework arrangement.

4a. Regularly Scheduled Participation - Request is approved or disapproved by the Program or Staff Office Director. Any requests for exception to the Plan must be sent through the Management and Budget Office for the Assistant Administrator's approval.

4b. Intermittent or Episodic Participation - Request is approved or disapproved by the Program or Staff Office Director or the Division Chief if that authority has been redelegated. Any requests for exception to the Plan must be sent from the Program or Staff Office Director through the Management and Budget Office for the Assistant Administrator's approval.

5. In approved Telework arrangements, supervisors, managers, and employees participating in telework must take NOAA's Telework training prior to participating in telework. Training is required only at the first request and not needed for subsequent renewals unless a major policy change has occurred or requested by the supervisor.

6a. If the agreement is to work at a Telecommuting Center, arrangements must first be made to tentatively reserve a workstation for the employee at the desired telecenter through the NOAA Telework Coordinator and then complete all appropriate paperwork for that location.

6b. If the employee is to work at home and will use his/her personal equipment, arrangements must be made, as necessary, to borrow software installation disks (or CD's) and installation instructions for installing on the employee's personal computer at the alternative work site (if software packages' licensing agreement allows). If the employee is using government equipment, arrangements must be made to transfer the equipment to the employee's home as well as completing the appropriate personal property/security forms.

7. Obtain information required for accessing the secured operations of the conventional office if needed.

8. Verify that all IT security requirements have been met (i.e., firewall and virus scan software installed on computer used at the alternative work site) and that the employee has completed the Security Awareness Training.

9. Begin Telework!

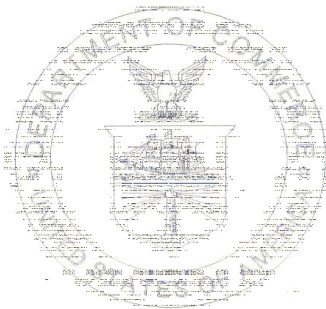
#### **MODIFICATION/TERMINATION OF TELEWORK**

Telework is a management option rather than an employee benefit and does not change the terms and conditions of employment. The operational needs of the office are paramount. Employees who telework do not have an automatic right to continue to telework. Telework arrangements may be modified, adjusted, or terminated at any time deemed necessary by management or when requested by an employee. Management has the right at any time to end an employee's use of telework, if, for example, the employee's performance declines or if the arrangement no longer meets the organization's needs. Participation in telework will be terminated when the employee no longer meets the eligibility criteria.

Management shall provide sufficient notice, when feasible, before modifying or terminating a telework agreement to allow the affected employee to make necessary arrangements. The reason for termination will be documented by the NOAA Telework Termination Form (Attachment 7), signed by the approving official and a copy given to the affected employee. Consent or acknowledgment via signature by the terminating employee is not required for the termination to take effect.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
TELEWORK PROGRAM




January 2003

Approved By:

  
Deborah A. Jefferson  
Director for Human  
Resources Management

01-15-03  
Date

  
Otto J. Wolf  
Chief Financial Officer and  
Assistant Secretary for Administration

01-16-03  
Date

**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
TELEWORK PROGRAM**

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**BACKGROUND**

Telework refers to paid employment performed away from the conventional office, either at home or at an alternative office site, for an agreed-upon portion of the workweek. Telework should not be confused with home-based businesses or independent contractor arrangements in the home. It also differs from situations where employees permanently work out of their home, traveling daily to clients or audit and inspection sites on premises not controlled by their employers. Telework is also known as telecommuting, flexiplace, and work-at-home.

The 2001 Department of Transportation appropriations measure, which became law in October 2000 (Public Law 106-346), requires agencies to establish policies allowing eligible employees to telework “to the maximum extent possible without diminishing employee performance.” The law also directs OPM to ensure that the requirement applies to at least twenty-five percent of the Federal workforce within six months, and to an additional twenty-five percent each year thereafter.

## POLICY

**Telework Implementation Plans.** In accordance with Section 359 of Public Law 106-346, it is the DOC policy to allow eligible employees to work at sites away from their official workplaces during all or a portion of their regular workweek. To implement this policy to the fullest extent possible, the Department's bureaus and operating units will each establish a telework implementation plan that

- provides a minimum of twenty-five percent of eligible employees to telework by October 2001, followed by an additional twenty-five percent each year for the next three years;
- specifies the types of positions or duties within positions that are suitable and eligible for telework;
- authorizes the expenditure of funds to cover expenses associated with approved telework arrangements, subject to funding availability and managerial discretion;
- establishes a process for approving telework arrangements;
- provides for orienting new teleworkers and their supervisors regarding the program and their responsibilities; and
- establishes procedures for administering and evaluating the telework program in their organizations.

**Approving Official.** Telework implementation plans will identify the official(s) in each organization who will be authorized to approve telework arrangements. Approving officials must be at a sufficiently high level within the organization to ensure adequate review and control. Where that official is someone other than an employee's immediate supervisor, the supervisor must concur regarding the duties to be performed at the alternative worksite and the employee's eligibility to participate.

**Voluntary Participation.** Employee participation in telework is voluntary and employees may terminate their participation at any time. While telework is a management option, organizations may not direct or coerce employees to participate. Written agreements documenting the terms and conditions of regularly scheduled telework arrangements will be drafted and maintained in accordance with the telework implementation plan.

**Modification and Termination.** Telework is a management option rather than an employee benefit and does not change the terms and conditions of employment. The operational needs of the bureau/operating unit are paramount. Employees who telework do not have an automatic right to continue to telework. Telework arrangements may be modified, adjusted, or terminated at any time deemed necessary by management or when requested by an employee. Management has the right at any time to end an employee's use of telework, if, for example, the

employee's performance declines or if the arrangement no longer meets the organization's needs. Participation in telework will be terminated when the employee no longer meets the eligibility criteria.

Management shall provide sufficient notice, when feasible, before modifying or terminating a telework agreement to allow the affected employee to make necessary arrangements. The reason for termination will be documented in a termination agreement (see sample Termination Form on page 22) signed by the approving official and furnished to the affected employee. Consent or acknowledgment via signature by the terminating employee is not required for the termination to take effect.

**Equal Opportunity.** Participation in telework is open to all eligible employees without regard to race, color, gender, religion, national origin, marital status, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

**Standards of Conduct and Ethics.** Employees who telework are expected to comply with the DOC standards of conduct and ethics contained in Departmental Administrative Order (DAO) 202-735-A, while working at the alternate work site. DAO 202-735-A is available at <http://www.osec.doc.gov/omo/daos/202-735a.htm>. Failure to comply may result in termination of the telework agreement and disciplinary action for misconduct.

**Labor-Management Relations.** In organizations where employees are represented by a labor organization accorded exclusive recognition, management is obligated to notify the labor organization of its intent to implement this policy and negotiate in good faith, as appropriate. Organizations are encouraged to involve labor unions at the earliest stages of planning and implementation. Nothing in this policy shall abrogate or override any collective bargaining agreements in effect on the date this policy is issued.

## SCOPE

The provisions of this document apply to all supervisory and non-supervisory employees participating in the DOC Telework Program. They do not apply to employees serving probationary or trial periods, nor for student interns unless an exception is authorized by the DOC Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) based on operational need. For purposes of telework, the alternate work site is considered to be an official Government work site. The conventional work site will continue to be the official duty station of an employee who teleworks.

## PROGRAM OVERSIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**OHRM** is responsible for Departmental oversight of the DOC Telework Program and any reporting requirements to OPM. OHRM shall approve and monitor the various implementation plans to assure consistency across the bureaus and operating units in the implementation of the DOC telework program. OHRM shall periodically review telework approvals and disapprovals to ensure consistency of application, direct changes as necessary, and

provide training as required.

**Each Bureau/Organization** is responsible for the development, funding, administration, operation and evaluation of its telework implementation plan. Each bureau/operating unit shall provide a copy of its telework implementation plan to OHRM prior to the plan's implementation. No such plan shall be implemented without the prior OHRM approval.

**Approving officials** authorize participation in the telework program. Approving officials are responsible for documenting approval/disapproval decisions and the rationale for such decisions, for each employee request to participate in the telework program. Upon request, approving officials are required to provide to OHRM documented approvals and disapprovals to allow monitoring of the program for consistency among approving officials.

**Supervisors** are responsible for the overall management and success of teleworking within their work units, including day-to-day operations, modifications to individual telework agreements to meet mission needs or changing circumstances, and maintaining records and information necessary for evaluation of the program.

**Principal and servicing human resources managers** are responsible for providing advice and assistance to client organizations on the telework program.

## **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Periodically, bureaus and operating units will be required to report to OHRM on the status and success of their telework programs. As a minimum, organizations will be expected to furnish data on the number of employees eligible to participate in telework and the number actually participating.

## **IDENTIFYING JOBS AND DUTIES SUITED FOR TELEWORK**

Although many positions are suitable for telework, the new law recognizes that not all aspects of all jobs can be performed at alternate work sites. Each organization must identify the positions that are suitable for telework as well as those positions that, when considered in their entirety, are not.

Work suitable for telework depends on job content, rather than job series or title, type of appointment, or work schedule. But even jobs not entirely suited for telework may contain duties that can be performed at an alternate work site either on a regularly scheduled or episodic basis.

General Services Administration guidelines identify several tasks and functions generally suited for telework include. These include, but are not limited to:

- thinking and writing;
- policy development;

- research;
- analysis (e.g. investigating, program analysis, policy analysis, financial analysis);
- report writing;
- telephone-intensive tasks;
- computer-oriented tasks (e.g. programming, data entry, word processing, web page design); or
- data processing, in cases in which the security of data can be adequately assured.

**Positions not generally eligible for telework** are those positions, as determined by the management of each organization, involving tasks that are not suitable to be performed away from the traditional worksite, including tasks that:

- require the employee to have daily face-to-face contact with the supervisor, colleagues, clients, or the general public in order to perform his or her job effectively, which cannot otherwise be achieved via email, telephone, fax or similar electronic means;
- require daily access to classified information;
- involve the construction/installation, maintenance, and/or repair of Commerce facilities,
- involve the physical protection of Commerce facilities or employees,
- are part of trainee or entry level positions.

## **SELECTING TELEWORK PARTICIPANTS**

**Basic Eligibility Requirements.** Although the approving official has decision authority, an employee and supervisor should work together to determine if telework is appropriate. An employee may be authorized to telework if:

- The immediate supervisor certifies that sufficient duties or work activities can suitably be performed at an alternate work site;
- For a five level performance management system, the employee's most recent performance appraisal is "Commendable" or "Outstanding," his/her record of attendance shows no pattern of leave abuse or excessive absence, as determined by the organizational unit, and the immediate supervisor certifies that no additional factors, as described below, preclude the employee from entering

into a telework agreement.

- For a pass/fail performance management system, the employee's most recent performance appraisal is "Meets or Exceeds Expectations" or "Eligible" depending upon the system, and in the performance of his/her duties, the employee consistently meets performance plan objectives in terms of quality and quantity of work, demonstrates a high level of proficiency in solving problems as they arise, and produces high quality written products which are unambiguous and convincing. The employee must also demonstrate a high level of reliability in following supervisory and organizational policies and procedures in the performance of assigned duties. As for the five level performance management system, the employee's record of attendance shows no pattern of leave abuse or excessive absence, as determined by the organizational unit, and the immediate supervisor certifies that no additional factors, as described below, preclude the employee from entering into a telework agreement.
- The employee signs a written telework agreement.

**Additional Factors for Consideration.** In determining if telework is appropriate, bureaus and operating units should establish additional factors to augment the basic eligibility requirements. These factors must be identified in the telework implementation plan. Examples of additional factors are:

- **Conduct.** Is the employee's conduct considered acceptable? A record of misconduct does not necessarily prevent an employee from teleworking but it can be considered when the nature of the misconduct may cast doubt on the employee's ability to successfully work at an alternative work site. For example, an employee with a history of unauthorized absences or leaving the work site without permission may not be a suitable candidate for telework.
- **Supervision.** Is the employee capable of working without close supervision? Telework may not be suitable for employees in developmental or on-the-job training assignments which require close monitoring.
- **Organization and time management skills.** Is the employee effective in setting work priorities and meeting deadlines?
- **Contact with others.** Does the employee need to have face-to-face contact with the supervisor, other employees, clients, or the general public?
- **Immovable material.** Does the employee need access to material that cannot be moved from the regular workplace?
- **Facilities and equipment.** Is the bureau/operating unit capable of providing special equipment or facilities necessary for the employee to telework? Would it be costly for the organization to duplicate the same level of security at the alternate workplace?

- Other. Does the employee need to be in the office to learn the organization? Will telework adversely affect the performance of the employee who teleworks or his or her coworkers?

### **AUTHORIZED TELEWORK ARRANGEMENTS**

The Department authorizes two types of telework arrangements, based on a realization that organizational and employee needs vary considerably and should be addressed on a case-by case basis. Some employees may desire or need only occasional periods of work place flexibility, while others may wish to telework for longer periods under regularly scheduled arrangements. The intent is to provide individual supervisors and employees with flexibility in establishing arrangements that are responsive to unique work and personal situations. DOC employees may request one of the following telework arrangements:

- **Intermittent or Episodic** - Approved telework performed on an occasional, one-time, or irregular basis. (Telework of less than one day per pay period is considered ad hoc.)
- **Regularly Scheduled** - Approved telework where the eligible employee regularly works at least one day per bi-weekly pay period at an alternate work site.

### **TELEWORK AGREEMENTS**

Approved telework participants must sign a telework agreement before participating in telework. A copy of the signed telework agreement will be provided to the person(s) responsible for maintaining telework records in the organization. For employees who telework on an intermittent basis, a separate agreement for each telework episode is not necessary if the employee has signed an agreement to telework on an intermittent basis. Individual telework agreements must be renewed at least annually.

The telework agreement (see the sample Telework Application and Agreement on page 15) covers the terms and conditions of the telework arrangement. It also constitutes an agreement by the employee to adhere to applicable guidelines and policies. The telework agreement covers items such as the voluntary nature of the arrangement; duration of the telework agreement; hours and days of duty at each work site; responsibilities for timekeeping, leave approval and requests for overtime and compensatory time; performance requirements; proper use and safeguards of Government property and records; and standards of conduct.

### **ESTABLISHING THE WORK SCHEDULE**

For telework arrangements established on a regularly-scheduled basis, each telework agreement shall provide for a minimum number of days in the office. Employees are required to spend at least part of the week in the conventional office to minimize isolation and communication



problems, facilitate integration of the teleworking employee with co-workers in the conventional office, and attend required meetings, unless specifically exempted in writing by the agency head.

Work schedules identify the days and times the employee will work in each work setting. Normally, work schedules will parallel those at the regular work site but can be structured to meet the needs of participating employees and their supervisors. The process of establishing work schedules permits periodic adjustments to achieve an optimal schedule which can meet organizational requirements and suit employee needs. Work schedules may also include fixed times during the day for supervisor/employee telephone conversations. Establishing such times may be helpful to ensure ongoing communication. Electronic mail and voice mail offer additional supervisor/employee communications options.

### **HOURS OF DUTY, TIME AND ATTENDANCE AND PAY, AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES**

**Hours of Duty.** Normally, employees who telework will work the same schedules that they work in the regular office. Work schedules may be changed with supervisor approval and in accordance with established procedures. Completely unstructured arrangements where employees work at the alternative work site at will are not permitted. For additional information on hours of duty, consult the DOC Leave Handbook at [http://ohrm.doc.gov/information/handbook/leave\(toc\).htm](http://ohrm.doc.gov/information/handbook/leave(toc).htm).

**Certification and Control of Time and Attendance.** Proper monitoring and certification of employee work time is critical to the success of the program. The General Accounting Office guidelines regarding employees at remote sites require that agencies establish a time accounting method that provides the supervisor with reasonable assurance that employees at remote sites are working when scheduled. Some approved techniques mentioned, which could be applicable to telework arrangements, include: occasional supervisory telephone calls or e-mails to an employee during times the employee is scheduled to be on duty; occasional visits by the supervisor to the employee's alternative work site; and determining reasonableness of work output for time spent.

**Overtime Work.** In accordance with DOC pay policy, overtime must be approved in advance to preclude any unintended liability for premium pay. Employees who telework must have prior supervisory approval to work beyond their normal hours of duty. Failure to obtain supervisory approval may result in the termination of the telework arrangement. For additional information on overtime, consult the DOC Premium Pay Manual at <http://ohrm.doc.gov/information/handbook/premium.htm>.

**Leave.** Procedures for requesting leave remain unchanged. Employees are responsible for obtaining leave approval in advance and keeping timekeepers informed of leave usage. For additional information on leave, consult the DOC Leave handbook at [http://ohrm.doc.gov/information/handbook/leave\(toc\).htm](http://ohrm.doc.gov/information/handbook/leave(toc).htm).

**Workplace Environment.** Any employee participating in telework is expected to perform his/her duties and responsibilities at the telework location at a proficiency level equal to or greater than when performed onsite and work for the entire time period scheduled.

Consequently, it is critical that the alternate work-site be free from distractions and the employee free from obligations which would impair his/her ability to provide the same time and level of attention to the work product as when onsite.

**Dependent Care.** No telework arrangement is authorized which entails the employee providing of day care to any individual.

**Emergency Conditions.** Although a variety of circumstances may affect individual situations, the principles governing administrative leave, dismissals, and closings remain unchanged. If the employing organization announces an early dismissal due to inclement weather to allow employees to return home safely and the employee is working at a GSA Telecenter, the employee will follow the dismissal procedures of the Telecenter. If the employee is working at home when an early dismissal due to inclement weather is announced, the employee shall exercise discretion as to whether (s)he is capable of continuing work for the rest of the regularly scheduled shift. On a "snow closing day," employees who telework will be excused if the regular office is excused. When the employing organization announces an early dismissal of employees for non-emergency conditions such as on the day prior to a Federal holiday, employees who telework will be excused. When an emergency affects only the alternate workplace for a major portion of the workday, the employee is expected to report to the regular office or request supervisory approval of annual leave, compensatory time, credit hours if on a flexible work schedule, or leave without pay. When an employee knows in advance of a situation that would preclude working at the alternate workplace, the employee must either come to the regular office or request leave. For additional information, consult the DOC Leave Handbook at [http://ohrm.doc.gov/information/handbook/leave\(toc\).htm](http://ohrm.doc.gov/information/handbook/leave(toc).htm).

**Workers' Compensation.** Employees who telework are covered by the Federal Tort Claims Act or the Federal Employees Compensation Act and qualify for continuation of pay or workers' compensation for injuries or illnesses sustained while performing their official duties.

This is one reason that it is vital that a specific authorized work location must be identified in advance and adhered to by the employee. (See further discussion below in "FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT ISSUES.")

The supervisor's signature on the request for compensation attests only to what the supervisor can reasonably know, whether the event occurred at the conventional work site or at an alternative work site during official duty. Under normal circumstances, supervisors are often not present when an employee sustains an injury. Employees, in all situations, bear responsibility for informing their immediate supervisor of an injury at the earliest time possible. They must also provide details to the Department of Labor when filing a claim.

Telework arrangements for employees who currently are receiving continuation of pay or workers' compensation can help put them back to work and take them off the workers' compensation rolls. Also, supervisors may be able to find work that such employees are able to perform at home, or restructure existing work so that some of it may be completed at home.

**Duty Station.** For pay purposes, the "official duty station" is the employee's

conventional office. The teleworking employee's official duty station serves as the basis for determining special salary rates.

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## **FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**

**Home Alternative Office.** In the employee's home, a specific work location for performance of work-at-home duties must be identified and authorized in advance. Requirements will vary depending on the nature of the work and the equipment needed to perform the work. At a minimum, employees should be able to easily communicate by telephone with the supervisor, coworkers and serviced clients during the work-at-home day. In addition, employees are responsible for verifying and ensuring that their home work areas comply with health and safety requirements (see the sample Safety Checklist on page 19) . Home work areas must be clean and free of obstructions, in compliance with all building codes, and free of hazardous materials. An employee's request to telework may be disapproved or rescinded based on safety problems or the presence of hazardous materials. A supervisor or designated safety official may inspect the home office for compliance with health and safety requirements when deemed appropriate.

**Government-owned Equipment.** Bureaus and operating units will establish their own procedures regarding the purchase or transfer and installation of Government-owned equipment for its employees who telework. Bureaus/operating units are under no obligation to provide Government-owned equipment to their employees solely for the purpose of teleworking. Government-owned equipment is to be used only for official business and the Government retains ownership and control of the hardware, software and data. In these situations, the Government is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and replacement of such equipment. Teleworking employees must notify their supervisors immediately of any malfunction of Government-owned equipment.

Only hardware and software configuration procured by the Government and authorized by the approving official for the telework agreement should be installed on the Government-owned computers. Under no circumstances will employees be allowed to add non-Government owned or unauthorized hardware or software to the Government-owned computer.

**Computer Software Copyrights.** Where individual license agreements allow for computer software to be installed on multiple computers, as long as only one is in use at any given time, employees may install Government-licensed computer software on the home office computer to perform official work. Each software manufacturer's license agreement's terms must be examined on a case by case basis to determine whether or not this is permissible by the operating unit Chief Information Officer who will consult with the Office of General Counsel on the interpretation of any license. This will reduce out-of-pocket expenses for the employee, while expanding the nature of work that may be performed at the home alternative office.

       If the teleworking employee is using his or her personal computer equipment at home, the employee is responsible for the purchasing, servicing, and maintenance costs associated with that equipment. The Government will not reimburse employees for such costs.

For official Government business only and specific to the telework arrangement, appropriated funds may be used to pay for telephone line installation and monthly service charges for telephone, cable, or ISDN lines in the private residence of teleworking employees. Bureaus are under no obligation to provide funds for such installation and monthly service charge. However, the Government cannot pay for installation or monthly services charges for a single telephone, cable, or ISDN line that will be used for both Government and personal business purposes. Government calling cards may be used by teleworking employee to make long distance telephone calls to conduct official government business.

The teleworking employee is expected to pay for all costs incurred in operating an alternative office at home. As a consequence, the following represent cost issues for employees electing to work at home:

- The government will not reimburse employees for home utility costs associated with working at home.
- If the employee furnishes his or her own workstation at home, the government will not reimburse the employee for the purchasing costs. In addition, the employee is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and replacement of such equipment. Note: A typical workstation requires the following: 1) a personal computer; 2) a modem; 3) telecommunications software; 4) Internet service; 5) Internet browser software; 6) anti-virus software; and 7) general purpose software (e.g. word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation graphics software).

**Telecenters.** Authorized telecenters are those established by GSA. For a fee (per work station, per month, and depending on location), employees will have access to a wide array of up-to-date equipment, including modular work stations, a telephone with local and FTS 2000 service, a high speed computer with a color monitor and modem, laser printer, facsimile machine, multi-function copier, conference and storage space.

Each bureau will establish procedures to consolidate and manage requests for work stations within the Federal Telecenters and establish one agreement per Bureau for all its operating units. Payment to GSA will be made by the Bureau from one account with individual offices providing reimbursement. All costs must be absorbed within allocated operating budgets.

A listing of GSA Telework Centers can be found at <http://hydra.gsa.gov/pbs/owi/tclist.htm>.

## **PRIVACY ACT, SENSITIVE OR CLASSIFIED INFORMATION**

Decisions regarding the proper use and handling of sensitive data, as well as records subject to the Privacy Act, will be made by the individual supervisors who permit employees to work at home. Care must be taken to ensure records subject to the Privacy Act and sensitive non-

classified data are not disclosed to anyone except those who are authorized access to perform their duties. Classified data may not be removed from employees' official work sites to off-site locations.

## **TELEWORKING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECURITY POLICY**

Teleworkers are responsible for following the Department's Information Technology Security Program Policy, Remote Access Security Policy and Minimum Implementation Standards, all applicable policies contained in the Department's Information Technology Management Handbook, and his/her operating unit's teleworking information technology (IT) security policies to maximize the security of the information and systems under their control. Departmental IT policies are available at <http://www.osec.doc.gov/cio/ITMHweb/ITMHWEB1.html>. The workplace and workstation must be set up to afford secure information processing, including the proper storage of sensitive information in both electronic and paper form. The teleworker, following operating unit policies, must minimize security vulnerabilities to the workstation and the DOC network.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that teleworkers agree to follow the security practices outlined in the operating unit's teleworking IT security policies.

The Department's Chief Information Officer (CIO) is responsible for issuing and maintaining policies and minimum implementation standards for remote access security, which includes access to IT systems required for telework. These policies and minimum implementation standards outline responsibilities of CIOs as well as teleworkers to enable an effective working environment for the teleworker and the protection of Department systems from undue risk. Operating unit CIOs, with the support of their IT security officers, are responsible for establishing teleworking IT security procedures specific to their operating unit and providing secure telecommuting resources and operational controls commensurate with the sensitivity of the data processed, consistent with policies and minimum implementation standards provided by the Department's CIO.

## **PREPARING FOR THE TELEWORK ARRANGEMENT**

The following actions are to be taken when establishing a telework arrangement:

- The interested employee submits a completed application to the immediate supervisor (see sample Telework Application and Agreement on page 15).
- The employee and supervisor discuss the proposed telework arrangement and the type of work to be done by the employee at an alternative work site.
- If a suitable arrangement is reached, the employee and supervisor complete the sample Telework Application and Agreement and the self-certification safety checklist if the alternate work site is in the employee's home

(see pages 15 through 21).

- The telework agreement is signed by the employee, immediate supervisor and the telework approving official.
- Information required for accessing the secured operations of the conventional office is obtained.
- Depending on whether the alternative work site is the employee's home or a Federal Telecenter, one of the following actions will be necessary:
  - To use a GSA Federal Telecenter, arrangements must first be made to:
    - Tentatively reserve a work station for the employee at the desired telecenter.
  - If the employee will use his/her home equipment, arrangements must be made to:
    - Borrow software installation disks (or CDS) and installation instructions for installing on the employee's personal computer at home (if software package's licensing agreement allows).

### **TELEWORK TRAINING**

Training sessions on the basics of the DOC Telework Program will ensure a common understanding of its requirements. At a minimum, participating employees must attend a telework training session which outlines their role and responsibilities in the telework arrangement prior to participation. Supervisors must attend a training session which addresses determining position and employee eligibility for telework and employee and supervisor roles in the telework arrangement. The format of the training and manner of delivery will be determined by the organization and the servicing human resources office.

## **SAMPLE TELEWORK APPLICATION AND AGREEMENT**

### Section I (To be completed by the employee)

Employee's Name:

Organization:

Telephone:

Supervisor's Name and Title:

Telephone:

Address and Description of Alternate Work site: Telephone:

Description of work to be performed at the Alternate Workplace:

Equipment needed to perform work at the alternate workplace:

Furnished by the Employee \_\_\_\_\_ Furnished by the Agency

**Telework Schedule and Tour of Duty:**    ☐ Regularly Scheduled    ☐ Intermittent

Work Schedule Hours:

AWS Day Off (if applicable):

Telework Days:

### **Voluntary Participation**

The applicant voluntarily agrees to work at the approved alternate workplace indicated above and to follow all applicable policies and procedures. The applicant recognizes that the telework arrangement is a privilege, not a right.

**Salary and Benefits**

The supervisor and applicant agree that a telework arrangement is not a basis for changing the applicant's salary or benefits.

**Official Duties**

The applicant agrees not to conduct personal business while in an official duty status at the alternate work place (for example, caring for dependents or making home repairs are prohibited). Furthermore, the applicant agrees that telework is not a substitute for childcare, and that he or she will make appropriate arrangements for childcare as necessary to provide for a minimum of interruptions during the workday.

**Time and Attendance**

The supervisor agrees to certify bi-weekly the time and attendance for hours worked at the regular office and the alternate workplace and to make sure that the applicant's timekeeper has a copy of the applicant's work schedule. The employee may be required, at the supervisor's election, to complete a self-certification form.

**Leave**

The applicant agrees to follow established office procedures for requesting and obtaining approval for leave.

**Overtime**

The applicant agrees to work overtime only when approved in writing and in advance by the supervisor, and understands that claimed overtime work without such approval may result in termination of the telework privilege.

**Alternate Workplace Costs**

The employee understands that the Government will not be responsible for any operating costs that are associated with the use of the employee's home as an alternate work site, for example, home maintenance, insurance or utilities. The employee also understands that any entitlement to reimbursement for authorized expenses incurred while conducting business for the Government, as provided for by statute or regulation, is not relinquished by this agreement.

**Equipment/Supplies**

The employee agrees to protect any government-owned equipment and to use the equipment only for official purposes. Should the agency agree to provide government-owned equipment to the employee for the purposes of telework, they may install, service and maintain such equipment, as necessary. The employee agrees to install, service, and maintain any personal equipment used. The agency agrees to provide the employee with all necessary office supplies and also reimburse the employee for business-related long distance telephone calls.

**Security**

The applicant agrees to follow all existing security policies and procedures, including information technology security. The applicant certifies that (s)he has read and agrees to comply with the Department's Remote Access Security Policy and Minimum Implementation Standards and supplemental operating unit remote access implementation



guidance. The applicant agrees to access the Office of the Chief Information Officer website periodically such that (s)he will ensure cognizance of current information technology security policies and procedures. The Title 13 data, Privacy Act data, and other sensitive or classified data may not be accessed or used from the alternate workplace. Remote access to Lotus Notes will be granted, as needed.

**Liability**

The applicant understands that the government will not be held liable for damages to his/her personal or real property while (s)he is working at the approved alternate workplace, except to the extent the government is held liable under the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act and the Federal Tort Claims Act.

**Alternate Work Site Inspection**

The employee agrees to permit the Government to inspect the alternate work site during the employee's normal working hours to ensure proper maintenance of Government-owned property and conformance with safety standards. This is in addition to the self-certification that the employee must complete.

**Work Area**

An applicant working at home agrees to provide a designated work area adequate for performance of official duties.

**Injury Compensation**

The applicant understands that (s)he is covered under the Federal Employees Compensation Act if injured in the course of actually performing official duties at the alternate workplace. The applicant agrees to notify his/her supervisor immediately of any accident or injury that occurs at the alternate workplace and to complete any required forms. The supervisor agrees to investigate such a report as soon as possible.

**Work Assignments/Performance**

The employee agrees to complete all assigned work according to guidelines and standards in the employee performance plan. The applicant and supervisor agree to exercise good communication skills and work cooperatively to obtain a common understanding of expectations and desired results, and set reasonable and measurable objectives for work to be accomplished. The employee agrees to provide regular reports if required by the supervisor to help judge performance. The employee understands that a decline in performance may be grounds for terminating or modifying the telework arrangement.

**Disclosure**

The applicant agrees to protect government records from unauthorized disclosure or damage and will comply with requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 USC 552(a).

**Standards of Conduct**

The applicant agrees that (s)he is bound by official standards of conduct while working at the alternate workplace.

**Cancellation**

The applicant understands that the organization may cancel the telework arrangement and instruct him/her to resume working at the office. If the applicant elects to voluntarily withdraw from the program, (s)he is expected to give sufficient notice so that arrangements can be made to accommodate his/her return to a regular work schedule and (s)he must complete the Telework Termination Form.

**Compliance with This Agreement**

The employee's failure to comply with the terms of this agreement may result in the termination of this agreement and the telework arrangement. Failure to comply also may result in disciplinary action against the employee if just cause exists to warrant such action.

**Term**

Unless canceled or terminated earlier by either the employee or the employer, this agreement shall expire on \_\_\_\_\_, unless renewed by agreement of the employee and the employer.

**Applicant's Certification**

By signing this agreement, the applicant certifies that (s)he has read the terms of this agreement and agrees to follow the policies and procedures outlined in them as well as all other applicable policies and procedures:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Supervisor's Certification**

By signing this agreement the immediate supervisor of the employee certifies that the position of the applicant is suitable for telework and that the applicant is personally eligible for telework.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Section II (To be completed by the approving official)**

The application and agreement are:

- Approved as written
- Approved with the following modification:
- Disapproved for the following reason(s):
  - Work not suited to telework
  - Need for office coverage
  - Employee is in a developmental assignment or position
  - Alternate work site does not conform with safety requirements
  - Employee failed to attend required training on telework
  - Employee does not meet personal eligibility requirements
  - Employee's work requires heightened supervision and/or oversight
- Other (please specify):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approving Official's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## SAMPLE SAFETY CHECKLIST

Note: This checklist is to be completed only if the proposed alternate workplace is located in a private residence.

This checklist is designed to assess the overall safety of the designated work area of the alternate workplace. Each applicant should read and complete the self-certification safety checklist. Upon completion, the checklist should be signed and dated by the applicant and submitted to the immediate supervisor.

Applicant:

Telephone:

Location of alternate workplace:

Telephone:

Describe the designated work area:

A. Designated work area:

1. Are all stairs with four or more steps equipped with handrails?

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ N/A

2. Are all circuit breakers and/or fuses in the electrical panel labeled as to intended service?

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ N/A

3. Is all electrical equipment free of recognized hazards that would cause physical harm (frayed wires, bare conductors, loose wires, flexible wires running through the walls, exposed wires fixed to the ceiling)?

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ N/A

4. Will the building's electrical system permit the grounding of electrical equipment?

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ N/A

5. Are aisles, doorways, and corners free of obstructions to permit visibility and movement?

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ N/A

6. Are file cabinets and storage closets arranged so drawers and doors do not open into

walkways?

☐\_Yes      ☐\_No      ☐\_N/A

7. Are the chair casters (wheels) secure and the rungs and legs of the chair sturdy?

☐\_Yes      ☐\_No      ☐\_N/A

8. Are the phone lines, electrical cords, and extension wires secured under a desk or alongside a baseboard?

☐\_Yes      ☐\_No      ☐\_N/A

9. Is the office space neat, clean, and free of excessive amounts of combustibles?

☐\_Yes      ☐\_No      ☐\_N/A

10. Are floor surfaces clean, dry, and level?

☐\_Yes      ☐\_No      ☐\_N/A

11. Are carpets well-secured to the floor and free of frayed or worn seams?

☐\_Yes      ☐\_No      ☐\_N/A

12. Is there sufficient light for reading?

☐\_Yes      ☐\_No      ☐\_N/A

## **B. COMPUTER WORKSTATION (IF APPLICABLE)**

13. Is your chair adjustable?

☐\_Yes      ☐\_No      ☐\_N/A

14. Do you know how to adjust your chair?

☐\_Yes      ☐\_No      ☐\_N/A

15. Is your back adequately supported by a backrest?

☐\_Yes      ☐\_No      ☐\_N/A

16. Are your feet on the floor or fully supported by a footrest?

☐\_Yes      ☐\_No      ☐\_N/A

17. Are you satisfied with the placement of your Visual Display Terminal (VDT) and keyboard?

☐\_Yes      ☐\_No      ☐\_N/A

18. Is it easy to read the text on your screen?

☐\_Yes      ☐\_No      ☐\_N/A

19. Do you need a document holder?

☐\_Yes      ☐\_No      ☐\_N/A

20. Do you have enough leg room at your desk?

- ☐\_Yes                      ☐\_No                      ☐\_N/A
21. Is the VDT screen free from noticeable glare?
- ☐\_Yes                      ☐\_No                      ☐\_N/A
22. Is the top of the VDT screen eye level?
- ☐\_Yes                      ☐\_No                      ☐\_N/A
23. Is there space to rest the arms while not keying?
- ☐\_Yes                      ☐\_No                      ☐\_N/A
24. When keying, are your forearms close to parallel with the floor?
- ☐\_Yes                      ☐\_No                      ☐\_N/A
25. Are your wrists fairly straight when keying?
- ☐\_Yes                      ☐\_No                      ☐\_N/A

By signing this document, the applicant certifies that all of the above applicable questions were answered in the affirmative or, if answered in the negative, that the applicant will take all necessary corrective actions to eliminate any hazard (as revealed by a negative response) before (s)he begins to telework.

---

Applicant's Signature

---

Date

## SAMPLE TELEWORK TERMINATION FORM

The telework option is a privilege and not an employee right but rather falls under the supervisor's discretion to determine how work should be accomplished with the organization. Termination from the telework agreement can be either voluntary or involuntary.

This is notification that the telework agreement which was signed on \_\_\_\_\_ is no longer in effect and is hereby terminated.

Termination is based on (Please check one):

☐ Voluntary Withdrawal

☐ Involuntary Withdrawal

If involuntary terminated, this decision was based on:

☐ Requirements of the Current Work Assignment

☐ Reassignment or Change in Duties

☐ Lack of Office Coverage

☐ Failure to Maintain Employee Eligibility Standards

☐ Other (Please Specify):

Receipt Acknowledged

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





## NOAA SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDELINES FLEXIPLACE PILOT PROGRAM POLICY

Each Line/Staff/Program Office may choose to design its program within the parameters of the overall guidelines. Flexiplace policies and procedures should specify, at a minimum, the types of positions involved, the number of employees, associated costs, general schedules to be used, alternate work sites, and anticipated benefits.

The pilot program will be in effect for a minimum of one year in order to fully evaluate its benefits and impact on operations. Offices may begin participation in the pilot at any time.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

APPROVING OFFICIALS will authorize all participation in the pilot within their organizations and will assure appropriate funding, evaluate the impact of the program on the efficiency, effectiveness, and employee satisfaction of work operations within their organizations. Approving officials are the Line/Staff/Program Directors or their designees.

SUPERVISORS will: 1) select the employees to participate from those individuals volunteering within the program areas authorized by the Approving Official; 2) develop and amend performance work plans as needed for work performed away from the official duty station; 3) assign appropriate work to be performed at the alternate duty station; 4) adjust individual flexiplace arrangements to meet the needs of the units they supervise; and 5) maintain records and information necessary for evaluation of the program.

EMPLOYEES will: 1) provide information to complete work agreements; 2) observe agreed-upon hours of work in accordance with established policies; 3) observe policies on requesting leave when leave is to be taken; and 4) use Government equipment only for official purposes.

### SELECTION CRITERIA

#### Identifying the Position

Selection of suitable positions is the first step toward participating in the pilot program. After deciding that a certain position has Flexiplace possibilities, other criteria must be explored.

#### Contact Requirements

1. What percentage of the job is devoted to "face-to-face" contact with co-workers, other employees or agencies, or the public?

2. Can contact be readjusted to allow for telephone or electronic communications or can such contact be conducted when the employee is at the conventional office?

#### Reference Material Requirements

1. What percentage of the job relies upon access to photocopiers, telefax machines, or other specialized equipment?
2. Can access needs be grouped and scheduled for days when the employee is in the conventional office?

#### Travel Requirements

3. Can trips begin or end at the alternate worksite rather than the main office?
4. Can paperwork be done at the alternate worksite?

#### FORMS REQUIRED

5. A Flexiplace Work Agreement (Attachment B) is required for all participants.
6. The Flexiplace Screen Out Criteria Checklist (Attachment C) must be completed by the supervisor prior to approval of the flexiplace agreement. Answering yes to any of the questions will normally eliminate a person from consideration in the flexiplace program.
7. The Flexiplace Safety Inspection Checklist (Attachment D) must be completed by the employee and the supervisor before the Flexiplace Work Agreement may be approved.

#### TRAINING

Both employee participants and their supervisors must attend a training session prior to participation and should be coordinated with the appropriate servicing Human Resource Office.

#### SATELLITE OFFICES

Offices that wish to make this alternate work site available to their employees, must work with the NOAA Human Resources Management Office to make sure contractual agreements are met.

#### EQUIPMENT

Each Office may establish its own policy on purchase and installation of equipment. All equipment deemed necessary by the supervisor for completion of off-site work assignments will be provided by the organization within the parameters of governing laws, rules, and regulations, and budgetary constraints.

#### EVALUATION

The NOAA Human Resources Management Office will coordinate the evaluation of the pilot program in conjunction with the Department of

Commerce, participating offices, and the Office of Personnel Management and the General Services Administration as appropriate. Supervisors and participants are required to complete evaluation questionnaires at the beginning of the participation and each six months afterwards.

#### CONTACTS

Please contact your servicing Human Resources Management Office if you have any questions about the flexiplace program or would like assistance in setting up your program.

DOC OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION GUIDELINES FOR FLEXIPLACE PARTICIPATION

Flexiplace Pilot Program

December 1993

BACKGROUND

Flexiplace, also known as flexible workplace, work-at-home, telecommuting, and teleworking, refers to paid employment performed away from the conventional office, either at home or at an alternative office, for an agreed-upon portion of the workweek. Flexiplace should not be confused with home-based businesses or independent contractor arrangements in the home. It is also quite different from situations where employees permanently work out of their home, traveling daily to clients or audit and inspection sites on premises not controlled by their employers.

Flexiplace in the Federal government grew from a project begun in 1990. The President's Council on Management Improvement (PCMI) sponsored the government-wide Flexible Workplace Project to examine the feasibility of flexible workplace arrangements, on a limited basis, through pilot tests. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the General Services Administration (GSA) were given key roles in coordinating and evaluating flexiplace arrangements on behalf of the PCMI.

During this test period, the home was the primary alternative work site. OPM has evaluated the two-year pilot performance of the work-at-home component of the project and has found it to be successful. OPM supports the concept of flexiplace when practiced judiciously, and agencies now have authority to make flexible arrangements regarding where employees perform their work.

Recently, GSA has begun to implement three telecommuting centers in nearby Maryland and Virginia communities for use by Federal employees who work in the Washington, D.C. area. The telecommuting centers are financed by a \$5 million appropriation and are established in cooperation with local business and political officials and interested Federal agencies. The telecommuting centers offer an alternative workplace in outlying locations and provide needed data processing equipment and telecommunications and administrative support. This Federal telecommuting center pilot project has been approved as a

Reinvention Laboratory.

## BENEFITS

Flexiplace is an innovative management tool that can provide a variety of benefits. Employers can benefit by attracting and retaining a high-quality work force, reducing employee absenteeism and accommodating employees with health problems while they are still able and want to work. Employees can benefit by reduced commuting time and costs, capitalizing on their peak productivity periods, and increased flexibility in coordinating work priorities with personal and family responsibilities. Society and the environment can benefit by improved employment opportunities for the disabled and mobility-restricted persons, reduced problems associated with dependent care, reduced traffic congestion and its associated health, pollution and energy problems.

## PURPOSE

This flexiplace guide provides advice and instruction to supervisors and employees of the Office of Administration who participate in a Flexiplace Pilot Program. Flexiplace locations may include the employee's home (a space specifically set aside as an office or other appropriate area in the employee's residence) or GSA telecommuting centers. No supervisor or employee will be required to participate in the pilot program, nor is participation an employee right. The Office of Administration Flexiplace Pilot Program will test alternatives to the traditional work environment and evaluate potential benefits.

## POLICY

Administration Directors may present proposals to participate in the flexiplace pilot program to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration for approval. Presenting a proposal is intended to be a "one-time" event necessary to establish the general parameters for participation. Therefore, a proposal does not have to be so specific as to name participants, specify individual employee schedules, and the like. The proposal, however, must address the types of positions involved, anticipated numbers of employees, associated costs, general schedules to be used, alternative work sites, and anticipated benefits. Supervisors are responsible for determining, in consultation with their respective Office Directors, if positions are appropriate for off-site work and for examining both the content of the work and the performance of the employee. Once the parameters for participation have been approved by the Deputy Assistant Secretary, supervisors may recommend to their superiors pilot program participants and specify the conditions of participation. Administration Directors are delegated the authority to approve such recommendations.

A Flexiplace Work Agreement is required for all participants. One is included in this guide. In addition, Administration

Directors are responsible for ensuring that periodic evaluations of the pilot program will be performed. The Office of Human Resources Management will assist with appropriate evaluation methodology.

Employees are not required to participate in the pilot program, nor is participation an employee right. Because this is a supervisory work option, there is no automatic right of the employee to continue participation in the event of a change of supervisor, work situation, or job requirements. Administration Directors or supervisors may end participation in the program for individuals, an organizational segment or the entire office if operational problems occur that interfere with the service mission of the organization. In addition, flexiplace arrangements are not an employee right. The overall interests of the office must take precedence over working off-site on a scheduled off-site day if a conflict arises. Supervisors may make adjustments of individual schedules to meet the needs of the office. Administration Directors and supervisors shall provide sufficient notice whenever feasible, prior to cancelling an employee's participation or modifying the flexiplace arrangements.

#### PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

Administration Directors are responsible for the overall efficient management of the Office of Administration Flexiplace Pilot Program and all reporting requirements within their respective offices. Supervisory officials are responsible for day-to-day operations, adjustments of individual flexiplace arrangements to meet the needs of the units they supervise, and maintaining records and information necessary for Administration Directors to evaluate the program.

#### GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING PARTICIPANTS

Selection of participants for this pilot program is a key activity. While there is no fail-safe formula to assure success, the most common characteristics of successful flexiplace participants and criteria for selection are described below.

##### Identifying the Employee

The employee has demonstrated self-starter characteristics, can function independently and has demonstrated dependability.

The employee has good time management and organization skills.

The employee possesses a high level of skill and job knowledge.

The employee's overall performance evaluations are equivalent to fully successful or higher.

The employee has clearly defined performance standards.

The employee is willing to sign and abide by a written agreement defining participation and expectations.

If the alternative work site is the home, the employee is able to satisfy home work station requirements, including necessary equipment, privacy, lack of interruptions, and security of data.

#### Identifying the Supervisor

The supervisor is a proponent of the project.

The supervisor is comfortable with evaluating work performance by measuring performance by results and without direct observation.

The supervisor is an effective communicator and able to clearly define tasks and expectations and provide ongoing feedback.

#### Identifying the Position

Many different positions lend themselves to successful flexiplace arrangements. Each position should be examined, and specifically, distinct activities, functions, and tasks. In many cases, some portion of the position may be performed in a flexiplace environment.

Work activities are portable and can be performed effectively outside the conventional office.

Job tasks primarily are measurable or primarily project oriented.

Contact with other employees and serviced clientele is predictable.

Work contacts can be easily adjusted to allow for telephone communications or conducted when the flexiplace employee is at the conventional office.

The technology needed to perform the work off-site is currently available.

Security of data can be adequately assured.

Access to specialized equipment or materials not present at the off-site location can be grouped and scheduled for days when the flexiplace employee is in the conventional office.

#### FLEXIPLACE WORK AGREEMENT

Prior to participation, flexiplace participants and their supervisors will jointly sign a work agreement that can be terminated at any time by either supervisors or employees. The work agreement, which is included in this guide, covers the terms and conditions of the flexiplace pilot program. The work agreement constitutes an agreement by employees and supervisors to adhere to applicable guidelines and

policies. The work agreement covers items such as the voluntary nature of the arrangement; length of flexiplace assignment; hours and days of duty for each work site; responsibilities for timekeeping, leave approval, and requests for overtime and compensatory time; performance requirements; proper use and safeguards of government property and records; standards of conduct; and completion of required pilot program evaluation materials.

#### WORK SCHEDULES

Work performed away from the conventional office will vary depending upon the individual arrangements between employees and their supervisors. Flexiplace arrangements can be established on a continuing basis or on an ad-hoc, short-term basis.

For flexiplace arrangements established on a continuing basis, each work agreement shall provide for a minimum number of days in the office. Under normal circumstances, employees will work a minimum of three days in the conventional office. Successful programs have shown that employees need to spend at least part of the week in the conventional office to minimize isolation and communication problems, facilitate integration of the flexiplace employee with those in the conventional office, and to ease supervisors' adjustment.

Flexiplace arrangements may also be approved to permit an employee to work on an ad-hoc, short-term basis, for example when an employee could complete a project more efficiently or when an employee is temporarily incapacitated. In such cases, the work agreement should be as specific as possible concerning the schedule.

Work schedules identify the days and times the employee will work in each work setting. Work schedules can parallel those in the office or be structured to meet the needs of participating employees and their supervisors. The process of establishing work schedules permits periodic adjustments to achieve an optimal schedule which can meet organizational requirements and suit employee needs. Work schedules may also include fixed times during the day for supervisor/employee telephone conversations. Establishing such times may be helpful to ensure ongoing communication.

A regular schedule makes it easier to stay in touch with colleagues and to be available to clients. Supervisors must approve flexitime schedules in advance to preclude any unintended liability for premium or overtime pay and to ensure proper administration of other employee benefits. In addition, care must be taken not to approve any flexiplace schedule that is inconsistent or in conflict with provisions made under the Alternative Work Schedules program.

#### HOURS OF DUTY, TIME AND ATTENDANCE, AND PAY ISSUES



Hours of Duty. Supervisors may follow the traditional work schedule of eight hours per day, five days per week, 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.; or permit employees to follow work schedules approved under the Alternative Work Schedule Program. Completely unstructured arrangements where employees work at the alternative work site at will are not permitted.

Overtime Work. Work schedules, as described below, determine entitlement to overtime compensation.

Standard work schedule (currently 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.). Overtime work is all hours of work in excess of eight hours in a day or 40 hours in a week which are officially ordered in advance by management. Under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), employees may earn overtime pay even though the overtime work was voluntary and not officially ordered or approved. The FLSA counts as overtime any work that a supervisor "suffers or permits" his/her subordinates to work. "Suffered and permitted" overtime is any work performed for the benefit of the agency, whether ordered or not, provided the supervisor knew or had reason to believe that the work was being performed and had a chance to stop it.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to regulate and control the use of overtime. Employees are responsible for requesting, in advance, approval to work in excess of their normal hours of duty. This is particularly important when employees are working at home or a telecommuting center without direct supervisory oversight. The potential liability for FLSA overtime could be hard to control if clear directions are not provided to participating employees.

Flexible Work Schedules under the Alternative Work Schedule Program. Overtime work is all hours of work in excess of eight hours in a day or 40 hours in a week which are officially ordered in advance by management. The requirement that overtime hours be officially ordered in advance also applies to nonexempt employees under the FLSA. There is no concept of "suffer and permit" for overtime work performed under flexible work schedule programs.

Compressed Work Schedules under the Alternative Work Schedule Program. Overtime work is all hours officially ordered in excess of the established compressed work schedule. Overtime is not paid for hours worked in excess of eight hours per day or 40 hours per week when part of a compressed work schedule.

Certification and control of time and attendance. Proper monitoring and certification of employee work time is critical to the success of the program. The General Accounting Office guidelines regarding employees at remote sites require that agencies establish a time accounting method that provides the supervisor with reasonable assurance that employees at remote sites are working when scheduled. Some of the approved techniques mentioned which could be applicable to flexiplace arrangements include occasional supervisory telephone calls to an employee during times the employee is scheduled to be on duty;

occasional visits by the supervisor to the employee's alternative work site; and determining the reasonableness of work output for the time spent.

Leave. The policies for requesting annual leave, sick leave, or leave without pay remain unchanged. Employees are responsible for requesting leave in advance from supervisors and keeping timekeepers informed of leave usage.

Administrative leave, dismissals, emergency closing. Although a variety of circumstances may affect individual situations, the principles governing administrative leave, dismissals, and closing remain unchanged. The ability to conduct work (and the nature of any impediments), whether at home, or at a telecommuting center, or at the conventional office, determines when an employee may be excused from duty. For example, if severe weather conditions and hazardous commuting difficulties necessitate the conventional office closing, and if the employee is working at home, normally, the flexiplace employee will continue working at home. Using this same example, if the employee's work site at home also is affected (the employee's electricity fails because of the severe storm), the supervisor may grant administrative leave. When an employee knows in advance of a situation that would preclude working at home, either time in the office or leave should be scheduled.

Workers' Compensation. Flexiplace employees are covered by the Federal Tort Claims Act or the Federal Employees Compensation Act and qualify for continuation of pay or workers' compensation for on-the-job injury or occupational illness. This is one reason that it is vital that a specific authorized work location must be identified in advance and adhered to by the employee. (See further discussion below in section titled, "FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT ISSUES.")

The supervisor's signature on the request for compensation attests only to what the supervisor can reasonably know, whether the event occurred at the conventional work site or at an alternative work site during official duty. Under normal circumstances, supervisors are often not present when an employee sustains an injury. Employees, in all situations, bear responsibility for informing their immediate supervisor of an injury at the earliest time possible. They must also provide details to the Department of Labor when filing a claim.

For employees who currently are receiving continuation of pay or workers' compensation, flexible work place arrangements can help put injured employees back to work and take them off the compensation rolls. Managers may be able to find work that such employees can perform at home, or managers may be able to "restructure" existing work so that some of it may be performed at home.

Duty Station. For pay purposes, the "official duty station" is the employee's conventional office. The employee's official duty

station serves as the basis for determining special salary rates.

#### FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT ISSUES

Home alternative office. A specific authorized work location for performance of work-at-home duties must be identified in advance. Requirements will vary depending on the nature of the work and the equipment needed to perform the work. At a minimum, employees should be able to easily communicate by telephone with the supervisor during the work-at-home day. In addition, employees are responsible for verifying and ensuring that their homes comply with health and safety requirements. Home offices must be clean and free of obstructions. The home must be in compliance with all building codes and free of hazardous materials. A supervisor may deny an employee the opportunity to participate or may rescind a flexiplace agreement based on safety problems in the home or suspected hazardous materials in the home. The supervisor may also inspect the home office for compliance with health and safety requirements when deemed appropriate.

Home utility costs associated with working at home are not paid by the government. Potential savings to the employee resulting from reduced commuting, meals, etc. may offset any incidental increase in utility expenses. Exceptions apply only where the personal expense directly benefits the government, e.g., business-related long distance calls on the employee's personal phone.

Administration Directors must establish their own policy on purchase and installation of equipment. Some may agree to purchase or install equipment, while others, due to budget constraints or other management reasons, may choose not to. Administration Directors may make this decision on a case-by-case basis considering such factors as the nature of the work, availability of existing equipment, etc. In some instances, participation in the program may be contingent on equipment costs if equipment is needed to perform the job.

Transfer of government-owned computers, printers, modems and other data processing equipment from the Office to the home residence and back is determined by the Office. This equipment is to be used only for official business. The government must retain ownership and control of hardware, software, and data. In these situations, the government is responsible for maintenance, repair, and replacement of such equipment. Employees must notify supervisors immediately following a malfunction of government-owned equipment.

For government-owned computers, only hardware/software configuration procured by the Federal government and authorized by an approving official for the alternative work site should be installed. Under no circumstances should employees be allowed to add non-government owned or unauthorized hardware or software to the home work station. In addition, supervisors must ensure that the

designated work space of the employee has adequate physical or environmental security measures in place to protect the equipment from being accessed by unauthorized individuals.

If employees provide their own computer equipment, they do so at their option and are responsible for purchasing, servicing and maintenance costs. The government will not be liable for reimbursing employees for such costs.

For official government business only and specific to Flexiplace, Federal agencies may use appropriated funds to pay for telephone installation and basic services in private residences. The government cannot pay for a single line that will be used for both government and personal calls. The government can reimburse the employee for long distance calls made as part of official duties on a residential phone.

Telecommuting center office. Telecommuting centers which may be utilized are those established by the General Services Administration under the Interagency Telecommuting Pilot Project. For a nominal fee (at this time, \$100 per work station, per month), employees will have access to a wide array of modern equipment, including modular work stations, a telephone with local and FTS 2000 service, a high speed computer with a color monitor and modem, laser printer, facsimile machine, multi-function copier, conference and storage space. Training will be provided for employees at the centers and for supervisors and co-workers at each agency's central office.

Agencies wishing to use the telecommuting centers must enter into a 12-month agreement with the centers. For administrative convenience, the Office of Administration would consolidate requests for work stations within the telecommuting centers and establish one agreement per center. Payment would be made from one account with individual offices providing reimbursement. All costs must, of course, be absorbed within allocated operating budgets.

At least three telecommuting centers will be established in nearby Maryland and Virginia communities. At this time, a center in Winchester, Virginia has opened. In southern Maryland, a GSA team is working with a tri-county partnership that includes several public and private regional planning organizations and the Charles County Community College which has agreed to operate the center. GSA expects this center to open in mid-October 1993. Similar efforts are underway with public officials in other communities such as Hagerstown, Maryland; the Eastern Shore of Maryland; and Fredericksburg, Virginia.

#### PRIVACY ACT, SENSITIVE OR CLASSIFIED DATA

Decisions regarding the proper use and handling of sensitive data, as well as records subject to the Privacy Act, are delegated to

individual supervisors who permit employees to work at home. Care must be taken to ensure that records subject to the Privacy Act and sensitive non-classified data are not disclosed to anyone except to those who are authorized access to such information in order to perform their duties. Classified data may not be removed from employees' official work sites to off-site locations.

#### EVALUATION OF FLEXIPLACE PILOT PROGRAM

Evaluation of the pilot program is critical to determining the feasibility and desirability of flexiplace as an alternative work arrangement. As previously mentioned, Administration Directors are responsible for ensuring that periodic evaluations of the pilot program will be performed and providing appropriate reports to the Deputy Assistant Secretary. The Office of Human Resources Management will assist with appropriate evaluation methodology.

GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING TELEWORK PARTICIPANTS

**Identifying the Supervisor**

- The supervisor is a proponent of the project.
- The supervisor is comfortable with evaluating work performance by measuring performance by results and without direct observation.
- The supervisor is an effective communicator and able to clearly define tasks and expectations and provide ongoing feedback.

**Identifying the Employee**

- The employee has demonstrated self-starter characteristics, can function independently and has demonstrated dependability.
- The employee has good time management and organization skills.
- The employee possesses a high level of skill and job knowledge.
- The employee's most recent performance rating of record and current performance is at least "Meets or Exceeds".
- The employee has clearly defined performance standards.
- The employee is willing to sign and abide by a written agreement defining participation and expectations.
- If the alternative work site is the home, the employee is able to satisfy home work station requirements, including necessary equipment, privacy, lack of interruptions, and security of data.

**Identifying the Position**

- Many different positions lend themselves to successful telework arrangements. Each position should be examined, and specifically, distinct activities, functions, and tasks. In many cases, some portion of the position may be performed in a telework environment.
- Work activities are portable and can be performed effectively outside the conventional office.
- Job tasks primarily are measurable or primarily project oriented.

- Contact with other employees and serviced clientele is predictable.
- Work contacts can be easily adjusted to allow for telephone communications or conducted when the telework employee is at the conventional office.
- The technology needed to perform the work off-site is currently available.
- Security of data can be adequately assured.
- Access to specialized equipment or materials not present at the off-site location can be grouped and scheduled for days when the telework employee is in the conventional office.

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#### Attachment 4



# **NOAA TELEWORK APPLICATION AND AGREEMENT**

## Section I (Completed by Employee)

**Employee's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Telephone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Job Title:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Series and Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Division:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Office:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor's Name and Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Official Duty Station:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **I Request to Telework at:**

\_\_\_ **GSA Federal Telework Center (Location):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ **Alternative Workplace (Location):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Section II (Telework Agreement)

The following constitutes an agreement on the terms and conditions of the telework arrangement for working at an authorized alternative workplace between the Employee and the Supervisor.

Description of work to be performed:

A copy of the agreement will be retained by the supervisor and the employee for reference.

### **Voluntary Participation**

The employee voluntarily agrees to work at the approved alternative workplace indicated on the attached NOAA Telework Application. The supervisor concurs with the employee's participation. The employee and supervisor agree to follow all applicable policies and procedures established by the Department of Commerce and NOAA. The employee recognizes that the telework arrangement is not an employee entitlement but an additional method that the employer may approve to accomplish work.

### **Performance/Work Assignments**

The employee's most recent performance rating of record and current performance must be at least "Meets or Exceeds." The employee understands that a decline in performance may be grounds for canceling or modifying the alternative workplace arrangement.

The employee agrees to complete all assigned work according to procedures mutually agreed upon by the employee and the supervisor and according to guidelines and standards in the employee's performance plan.

### Approval Period

The employee will participate in the telework program on (check one):

A regularly scheduled (continuing) basis beginning

A non-regularly scheduled (intermittent/episodic) basis beginning \_\_\_\_\_ for up to  
(days/months).

This agreement shall expire on \_\_\_\_\_, unless cancelled or terminated earlier by either the approving official and/or employee, or renewed by agreement of the employee and approving official.

### Official Duty Station and Alternative Workplace

The supervisor and employee agree that all pay, leave, and travel entitlement are based on the official duty station as shown on the NOAA Telework Application cover sheet.

### Work Schedule and Tour of Duty

The supervisor and employee agree that the employee's official tour of duty is as shown in the table below (insert days and hours).

	<u>Week 1 of pay period</u>	<u>Week 2 of pay period</u>
<b>Official Duty Station</b>		
<b>Alternative Workplace</b>		

(For guidance on flexible work schedules, refer to the **Department of Commerce** or your unit's Alternative Work Schedule Plan, and specify the flexible band and the limits within which flexible hours may be worked.)

**Special Circumstances:**

**Alternative Workplace Costs**

The employee understands that the Government will not be responsible for any operating costs that are associated with the use of the employee's home as an alternative workplace, for example, home maintenance, insurance or utilities.

**Entitlement to Reimbursements**

The supervisor understands that the employee does not relinquish any entitlement to reimbursement for authorized expenses incurred while conducting business for the Government, as provided for by statute and regulations.

**Equipment/Supplies**

The employee agrees to protect any Government-owned equipment and/or supplies and to use the equipment only for official purposes. Any government-owned equipment issued to the employee will be serviced, maintained, and installed, if applicable, by NOAA. The employee is responsible for maintaining, installing, and the servicing of any personal equipment needed. The supervisor will provide the employee with all necessary office supplies and also reimburse the employee for business-related long distance telephone calls.

Equipment needed to perform work at alternative workplace:

NOAA Furnished: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Furnished: \_\_\_\_\_

*This section must be completed.*

**Alternative Workplace Inspection**

The employee agrees to permit the Government to inspect the alternative work site during the employee's scheduled working hours. The supervisor and employee agree that the purpose of any such inspection will be to ensure that the designated work area is adequate for performance of employee's official duties, meets required safety and security requirements, and to ensure proper maintenance of Government-owned property.

**Salary and Benefits**

The supervisor and employee agrees that a telework arrangement is not a basis for changing the employee's salary or benefits.

**Overtime**

The employee agrees to work overtime only when ordered and approved in writing by the supervisor and in advance of working the overtime. The employee understands that overtime work without such approval may not be compensated and may result in termination of the telework arrangement.

**Leave**

The employee agrees to follow established office procedures for requesting and obtaining approval of leave. The employee understands that if an emergency condition occurs either effecting the alternative

workplace or the Federal government, the employee must contact the supervisor for dismissal procedures.

### **Time and Attendance Reports**

The supervisor and employee are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of time and attendance reported for the employee's work at the official duty station and the alternative workplace. The supervisor agrees to certify biweekly the employee's Time and Attendance Daily Report for hours worked. The employee's timekeeper will retain a copy of the employee's work schedule.

### **Conducting Personal Business**

The employee agrees not to conduct personal business at the alternative workplace while in an official duty status for example, caring for dependents or making home repairs.

### **Liability**

The employee understands that the Government is not liable for damages to an employee's personal or real property while the employee is working at the approved alternative workplace, except to the extent the Government is held liable by the Federal Tort Claims Act or the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act.

### **Worker's Compensation**

The employee understands that (s)he is covered by Federal Employee's Compensation Act if injured in the course of performing official duties at authorized work locations. The employee agrees to notify his/her supervisor immediately of any accident or injury that occurs and to complete any required forms. The supervisor agrees to investigate such a report immediately.

### **Maintenance of Records**

The supervisor is responsible for maintaining all forms and records associated with this agreement.

### **Standards of Conduct**

The employee agrees to abide by the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch while working on official duty.

### **Disclosure**

The employee agrees to protect Government records from unauthorized disclosure or damage and will comply with requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a.

### **Cancellation**

The supervisor and employee understand that either party may cancel the Telework agreement with reasonable notice and require the employee to resume working at his/her official duty station. Reasons for cancellation will be documented by the supervisor and/or employee on NOAA's Telework Termination Form and filed with this agreement.

### **Compliance with this Agreement**

The employee's failure to comply with the terms of this agreement may result in the termination of this agreement and the telework arrangement. Failure to comply with the provisions of this agreement may

result in appropriate disciplinary or adverse action against the employee if just cause exists to warrant such action.

### **Certification**

By signing this agreement, the employee certifies that (s)he has read the terms of this agreement and agrees to follow the policies and procedures outlined in them as well as all other applicable policies and procedures:

Employee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approving Official's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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### ***Section III (Approval/Disapproval)***

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Your request to participate in the telework program is:

☐ **Approved as written**

☐ **Approved with the following modification(s):**

☐ GSA Federal Telework Center (Location): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Alternative Workplace (Location): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **Disapproved for the following reason(s):**

Work not suited to telework

Need for office coverage

☐ Employee is in a developmental assignment or position

☐ Alternative work site does not conform with safety requirements

Employee failed to attend required training on telework

Employee does not meet personal eligibility requirements

Employee's work requires heightened supervision and /or oversight

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

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Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approving Official's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## NOAA TELEWORK SAFETY CHECKLIST

*Note: This checklist is to be completed only if the proposed alternative workplace is located in a private residence.*

This checklist is designed to assess the overall safety of the designated work area of the alternative workplace. Each applicant should read and complete the self-certification safety checklist. Upon completion, the checklist should be signed and dated by the applicant.

Applicant:

Telephone:

Location of alternative workplace:

Telephone:

Describe the designated work area:

Within the designated work area:

1. Are all stairs with four or more steps equipped with handrails?

☐\_Yes

☐\_No

☐\_N/A

2. Are all circuit breakers and/or fuses in the electrical panel labeled as to intended service?

☐\_Yes

☐\_No

☐\_N/A

3. Is all electrical equipment free of recognized hazards that would cause physical harm (frayed wires, bare conductors, loose wires, flexible wires running through the walls, exposed wires fixed to the ceiling)?

☐\_Yes

☐\_No

☐\_N/A

4. Will the building's electrical system permit the grounding of electrical equipment?

☐\_Yes

☐\_No

☐\_N/A

5. Are aisles, doorways, and corners free of obstructions to permit visibility and movement?

☐\_Yes

☐\_No

☐\_N/A

6. Are file cabinets and storage closets arranged so drawers and doors do not open into walkways?

☐\_Yes

☐\_No

☐\_N/A

7. Are the chair casters (wheels) secure and the rungs and legs of the chair sturdy?

☐\_Yes

☐\_No

☐\_N/A

8. Are the phone lines, electrical cords, and extension wires secured under a desk or alongside a baseboard?

☐\_Yes

☐\_No

☐\_N/A

9. Is the office space neat, clean, and free of excessive amounts of combustibles?

☐\_Yes

☐\_No

☐\_N/A

10. Are floor surfaces clean, dry, and level?

☐\_Yes

☐\_No

☐\_N/A

11. Are carpets well-secured to the floor and free of frayed or worn seams?

☐\_Yes

☐\_No

☐\_N/A

12. Is there sufficient light for reading?

☐\_Yes

☐\_No

☐\_N/A

By signing this document, the applicant certifies that all of the above applicable questions were answered in the affirmative or, if answered in the negative, that the applicant will take all necessary corrective actions to eliminate any hazard (as revealed by a negative response) before (s)he begins to telework.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:

## FAMILY CARE NEEDS

Telework is a family-friendly initiative but there seems to be a lot of confusion as to what this entails. To some employees they think it's the solution to childcare and eldercare and it's not. Childcare or eldercare is a job in itself and employee's cannot do two jobs at once. So, if children or senior family members are in the home who require care from the employee, other arrangements must be made to care for them during the employee's hours of work just as if they were in the conventional office. Telework is a family-friendly initiative because it allows increased flexibility in an employee's work schedule to meet their everyday and emergency family care needs, increases time with family members by eliminating commuting times, and gives employees a more secure feeling that if an emergency occurs they will be close-by on days they are teleworking. First, however, the position and employee must both meet the criteria for Telework and there must be sufficient work to do at the alternate location. Following are Telework scenarios meeting an employee's family care needs.

### SCENARIO #1 - Regularly Scheduled Telework Arrangement

Employee lives an hour's drive from the office and has elementary school age children at home. Without Telework the employee must take the children to a childcare provider for before-and-after school care five days a week because they cannot stay home with the children until they leave for school, commute an hour's drive and still get to work by 9:30 a.m., and then be home in time when the child arrives from school. With a Telework arrangement the employee could:

o Save money by reducing the child care to two or three days a week and increase time with the children. To do this the employee could work two days at home or combine that with a day off from working a 4-day AWS schedule. In order to meet the requirement of work and family two example schedules could be as follows:

- Monday, Wednesday and Friday work in the conventional office 8:00 a.m.-4:30/5:30 p.m. (2 9-hour days as necessary to make up for a shorter work schedule when they work at home). Children attending before-and-after school care.
- Tuesday and Thursday work at home 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. with a 2-hour break in schedule when children come home from school and until spouse arrives to tend to children. Employee would then finish a 7-hour day from 5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.

Or

- Monday and Wednesday work in the conventional office 6:30 a.m. -5:00 p.m. (10-hour day). Children attending before-and-after school care.



- Tuesday and Thursday work at home 6:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. (10-hour day). Child care could be accomplished by the spouse getting the children ready and off to school in the morning and then a teenage babysitter in the afternoon from 3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.
- Friday as the AWS day off, no childcare would be required.

In this scenario the children are old enough to be in school. Work schedules may need to be modified during the summer break. Obviously for preschool age children this arrangement would not save much money because childcare arrangements would still be required every day except if the employee has an AWS day off. However, there would still be the benefit of spending more time with the children and less in daycare by eliminating the 2-hour commuting time and, if possible, staggering a spouse's work schedule.

If the children were teenagers and capable of taking care of themselves, a Telework arrangement would provide the benefit of reducing the children's time at home alone before and after school. The parent would be able to react immediately to emergencies.

#### SCENARIO #2 - Intermittent/Episodic Telework Arrangement

Employee lives an hour and a half drive from work. A family member (e.g., child, elder parent) breaks a leg and needs care for one month and, after that, physical therapy twice a week for another two months. Without Telework, the employee would have to take a lot of leave over the three-month period and the agency would have lost productivity. With a Telework arrangement the employee could:

- o Reduce their leave usage by working a portion of the day/week the first month and working full time for the last two months. The employee or a co-worker could pickup/drop off work or work could be transmitted electronically back and forth. The agency benefits by having the employee working part time instead of losing all productivity. To meet the family care needs an example of a Telework schedule could be:

Month 1:

- Monday-Friday work 6:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m. and then take 4 and a half hours leave. The employee's spouse provides care before they leave for work in the morning. The employee then takes over the rest of the day.

Months 2 and 3:

- Monday, Wednesday, Friday work at the office 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Family member is well enough to go to childcare, school or stay at home by themselves.
- Tuesday and Thursday work at home 6:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., break to take family member to physical therapy, then complete tour of duty from 12:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. All required childcare or arrangements with spouse are still in place. At the end of physical therapy, employee ends Telework and returns to the conventional office.

This scenario provides maximum flexibility for the employee. By eliminating the 3-hour commute, the employee is able to turn that time into productivity for the agency and reduced leave usage while still meeting their family care needs. However, as in all Telework arrangements, the determination must be made first that the employee and position lends itself to Telework and that there actually is enough work to keep the employee busy for their scheduled work hours.

#### SCENARIO #3 - Intermittent/Episodic Telework Arrangement

An employee lives a 30-minute drive from work. The employee requests a Telework arrangement during their teenage children's summer vacation. Without Telework the employee's children would be home alone for a large portion of the summer. With Telework the employee could:

- o Be more accessible for emergencies and, by being home 3 days a week, increase oversight of children. An example work schedule could be as follows:

- Monday and Wednesday work 6:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. (10 hours) in the conventional office.
- Tuesday and Thursday work 6:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m., break an hour for lunch, then finish the workday 12:00 noon-5:30 p.m. (10 hours) at home. Employee is immediately available to their children in case of emergencies.
- Friday is the AWS day off so employee is with the children all day.

#### SCENARIO #4 - Intermittent/Episodic Telework Arrangement

Employee requests Telework for the first 4 months after his wife has a baby. Without Telework the employee may need to take a lot of leave to help out at home. With Telework the employee could:

- o Reduce leave usage by arranging a schedule to help out at home and still continue a full work schedule; and reduce stress by eliminating 2 days of commuting and being there in case of an emergency. An example schedule could be:

- Monday, Wednesday and Friday work 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the conventional office.
- Tuesday and Thursday work 8:00 a.m.-12:00 noon, 2-hour break in schedule to help as needed, then continue work from 2:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Working at home allows the employee to catch up on sleep and spend time with his family during the day rather than at the end of the day when everyone is too tired.

These are just a few scenarios of how Telework can address family care needs. In all of these, required childcare or eldercare is accomplished by someone other than the employee during the employee's work hours at home. The keys to establishing a successful Telework

arrangement for family care needs is flexibility, good communication between the supervisor and employee and an understanding by both of what is allowed and expected of the employee.



## **NOAA TELEWORK TERMINATION**

The telework option is not an employee right but rather falls under the supervisor's discretion to determine how work should be accomplished with the organization. Termination from the telework agreement can be either voluntary or involuntary.

This is notification that the telework agreement which was signed on \_\_\_\_\_ is no longer in effect and is hereby terminated.

Termination is based on (Please check one):

Voluntary Withdrawal

Involuntary Withdrawal

If involuntary terminated, this decision was based on:

Requirements of the Current Work Assignment

Reassignment or Change in Duties

Lack of Office Coverage

Failure to Maintain Eligibility Standards (Please specify):

Other (Please Specify):

Receipt Acknowledged:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor's Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approving Official's Signature Date